

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5 1. A fitting for retrofitting to a tracheostomy tube comprising:

 an inlet portion for attachment to an outlet structure of the tracheostomy tube; and

 an outlet portion for extending from the outlet
10 structure of the tracheostomy tube, wherein the outlet portion is connected to the inlet portion, and wherein the outlet portion comprises at least one side opening.

 2. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 1, wherein
15 the outlet portion comprises a plurality of rows of side openings and a plurality of columns of side openings.

 3. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 2, wherein
20 each row is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is offset from an adjacent column.

 4. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 1, further comprising a filter attached to the outlet portion for filtering air that enters the fitting through the at least one
25 side opening.

 5. A fitting for retrofitting to a tracheostomy tube comprising:

 a hollow cylinder having an inner diameter, an outer
30 diameter, an inlet end opening and an outlet end opening, the cylinder further comprising:

 an inlet portion for attachment to an outlet structure of the tracheostomy tube, wherein the inlet portion comprises the inlet end opening; and

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an outlet portion for extending from the outlet structure of the tracheostomy tube, wherein the outlet portion is connected to the inlet portion, and wherein the outlet portion comprises the outlet end opening and at least one side opening that extends from the inner diameter to the outer diameter.

10 6. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 5, wherein the outlet portion comprises a plurality of rows of side openings that extend from the inner diameter to the outer diameter and a plurality of columns of side openings that extend from the inner diameter to the outer diameter.

15 7. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 6, wherein each row is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is offset from an adjacent column.

20 8. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 5, further comprising a filter attached to the outlet portion for filtering air that enters the fitting through the at least one side opening.

25 9. A tracheostomy tube comprising:
an inlet structure for insertion into a patient's trachea; and
an outlet structure for extending from an opening in the patient's neck, wherein the outlet structure is connected to the inlet structure, and wherein the outlet structure
30 comprises at least one side opening.

35 10. The tracheostomy tube of claim 9, wherein the outlet structure comprises a plurality of rows of side openings and a plurality of columns of side openings.

11. The tracheostomy tube of claim 10, wherein each row
is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is
5 offset from an adjacent column.

12. The tracheostomy tube of claim 9, further comprising
a filter attached to the outlet structure for filtering air
that enters the tracheostomy tube through the at least one
10 side opening.

13. A tracheostomy tube comprising:
an inlet structure for insertion into a patient's
trachea; and

15 an outlet structure for extending from an opening in
the patient's neck, wherein the outlet structure is connected
to the inlet structure, and wherein the outlet structure
comprises an inner diameter, an outer diameter and at least
one side opening that extends from the inner diameter to the
20 outer diameter.

14. The tracheostomy tube of claim 13, wherein the
outlet structure comprises a plurality of rows of side
openings that extend from the inner diameter to the outer
25 diameter and a plurality of columns of side openings that
extend from the inner diameter to the outer diameter.

15. The tracheostomy tube of claim 14, wherein each row
is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is
30 offset from an adjacent column.

16. The tracheostomy tube of claim 13, further
comprising a filter attached to the outlet structure for
filtering air that enters the tracheostomy tube through the at
35 least one side opening.

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17. A method of modifying a tracheostomy tube that
comprises an inlet structure for insertion into a patient's
5 trachea and an outlet structure for extending from an opening
in the patient's neck, the method comprising:

producing at least one side opening in the outlet
structure of the tracheostomy tube.

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